

Earth First! Action Update

No.33/34 NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 96

30p

'We'd have guns by now if we hadn't spent all the money on cider.' – Graffiti in the toilet at the A30 Action office.

NICE ONE!

And you thought school was a repressive means of social control, forced by the state onto resisting children refusing to acquiesce to the domestication of the human species. Well, it is actually, but we thought you may be amused and impressed by this article in a newspaper a few weeks back. It reads: 'Two children vandalised nineteen cars after a lesson at school about the dangers of air pollution. They used stones to scratch Porsches, Mercedes and BMW's in an underground car park at a block of flats in Kensington, causing £15,000 worth of damage. A police source said: "It seems the nine year old girl was enlightened by a teacher on the menace of the car. Later as she and her eleven year old friend were playing in the car park she told him exhaust fumes were damaging the environment and they hatched a plot to exact their revenge." Police cannot take action against the girl as she is under the age of criminal responsibility.'

HESELMINE!

What is becoming the annual opencast bash on Michael Heseltine's back lawn took place on Sunday 20th October where, before dawn, sixty ex-miners and environmental activists marched silently through a Northamptonshire Village and into the grounds of Thenford Hall, the Deputy Prime Minister's luxury retreat. Armed with pickaxes, shovels, hard hats and picnics, the Miners Support Group (MSG) association fenced off an area and began digging up the land of the one who pushed for the deep mine closure programs as Trade and Industry secretary and now promotes strip mining.

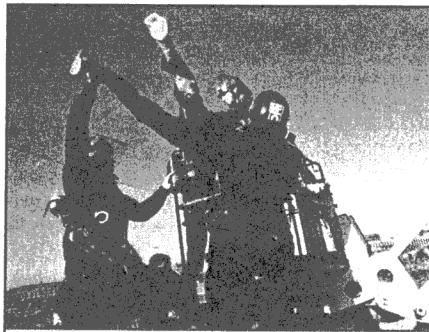
The MSG has lodged a planning application to develop a sixty-eight acre, open cast mine on the land and this was a preliminary bore hole to test water levels. Northamptonshire County Council have requested detailed proposals for the new mine. Heseltine has written to them saying he "fiercely opposes" the plans, which were made "without his consultation". But if the planning authorities agrees with the proposal it will go directly to the Environment Secretary John Gummer for approval.

It would appear that Mr Heseltine doesn't find Open Cast Mining quite so attractive in his own back yard. In the relevant planning guidelines there has to be very good reason to turn down Open Cast Mining proposals, so the MSG associates could soon be rich on an estimated one million tonnes of coal and Mr Heseltine could soon have an eyesore in his garden and asthma on his chest. Or maybe his objections can be used to block similar mines across the country. One digger said "we welcome Mr Heseltine's opposition to Open Cast Mining in this beautiful area but we would like to see him oppose it elsewhere – on public land in Yorkshire, Derbyshire and in other areas".

The Police took the role of observers and

Michael refused to speak to his visitors despite being called from a mobile to discuss the matter further.

There will be another action on January 5th on the Duke of Devonshire's estate in Derbyshire. Bring drums, fog horns and anything else that makes lots of noise to Chesterfield British Rail car park at 10.30 am. For more details contact: 0171 672 9698.



Villager being evicted from Wandsworth

ECO-VILLAGE EVICTED

In the early hours of Wednesday 18th October the Wandsworth Eco-Village in London, an ecologically sustainable land squat that has been going since May this year, could have been mistaken for an army assault course with a full scale invasion underway. Guinness, armed with 150 bailiffs and police, not to mention three patrol boats, stormed the thirteen acres of wasteland from all directions.

Whatever they were toolled up for it looks like they were given the wrong address, as police in full riot gear raced across the ground only to be confronted with someone with a kettle looking for water to make another cup of tea. For the invaders it was a case of procedure, for the inhabitants of the village it was a sad and painful moment that had always loomed nearby.

By late morning the village was cleared of all vehicles and trailers, except one bus that needed a jump start! Most of the people resisting eviction had been plucked from the rooftops of the houses and roundhouse, that they had built, the trees and the jetty, by cherrypickers. Closely following the cherrypickers were the machines of destruction, trashing ruthlessly the structures and razing them to the ground. The destruction continued until not a single blade of grass was visible. Portacabins were placed in areas where lush wildlife thrived only a few hours before and a perimeter fence was set up with razor wire before security guards moved on to defend what now resembles a concentration camp awaiting yet another supermarket, equipped with yuppie flats and massive car park.

For more info on future occupations contact The Land is Ours on: 01865 722016.

NEWBURY ACTIONS

Numbers resisting the construction of the Newbury Bypass have dwindled with thirty people having now been injunction off the route. More positively it looks increasingly likely that the presence of a very well defended tree and tunnel camp on a private access route at Spiritual Roots, Snelmore Common, may save the mature oaks there, as an alternative route is being examined.

Costain are in the stock market doldrums yet again, with their shares voluntarily suspended for the second time this year, pending the sale of their US coal interests. Let's hope that their troubles never cease.

On January 9-10th there will be a National Day of Action celebrating the anniversary of the first week of direct action last year where contractors were stopped in their tracks by dedicated and effective action. After a year of direct action against the bypass it is time people regrouped to show that their work can still be stopped.

The Newbury campaign has inevitably got smaller in its second phase, but what has happened here remains one of the most significant campaigns of co-ordinated direct action this country has ever seen. It's high media profile and wide reaching support exposed lots of people to direct action and saw hundreds of previously only armchair supporters stand up and help resist the destruction. Now more than ever it is important to maintain this momentum so whether you were there during Phase 1, but particularly if you weren't, go down to Newbury for these two days of action to show our collective strength again. For more details contact The Third Battle of Newbury on: 01635 45544.

LAMB ACTION

On Tuesday 12th November, the Lloyds And Midland Boycott campaign (LAMB) decided that 'the listening bank' needed a hearing aid, so paid a visit to the Head office of the Midland Bank. The anniversary of the Dili massacre in East Timor highlighted Midland's role in funding Hawk aircraft to Indonesia. Midland Bank claim that they 'do not fund weapons or items of an offensive nature', yet since the 1980's have funded arms and 'defence' equipment to, among others, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan and Turkey.

Inside the bank LAMbers locked on to turnstiles to prevent the lifts being used, read out eye witness accounts of the Hawks bombing of civilians; had a die in; blocked the entrances and generally caused a scene for five hours – during which time the people at the top were curiously 'not available for comment'. The pressure will continue as long as Midland are prepared to let millions of pounds of British taxpayers money prop up arms sales at no risk to the bank. More actions planned for next year, and remember, it's soon AGM season again. For more details contact LAMB on: 0161 274 4665.

NEWS IN BRIEF

The Autumn issue of Broken Bars, the political prisoners magazine, is out now. It carries a comprehensive list of political prisoners from all over the world. For a copy send £1.50 (including p&p) to Broken Bars, Box 25, 82 Colston Street, Bristol, BS1 5BB.

The Free Septal Campaign is fighting for the release of Septal Ram who is serving a life sentence for defending himself against a racist attack. For more details, and to see how you can help, send an SAE to: Free Septal Campaign, 101 Villa Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B19 1NH.

The SchNEWSround is now available from Justice? It has the past years set of SchNEWS (issues 51-100) and loads more. For a copy send £4.99 to Justice? Last years SchNEWS reader (issues 1-50) is still available for £2.99. As well as this Conscious Cinema have put together the Ultimate Conscious Cinema video which costs £4.99. To find out how you can order call : 01273 278018.

Undercurrents 6 is out now and is available for £9.95 (unwaged) or £12.95 (waged) from Undercurrents, 16b Cherwell Street, Oxford, OX4 1BQ.

Earth First!ers with an interest in permaculture are invited to an introductory weekend on the subject in Leeds in January. The cost of the weekend will be food and photocopying prices only. For details call Leeds Earth First! on: 0113 262 9365.

Check out the web site of those masked revolutionaries from Central America, the Zapatistas. You can find it at: <http://planet.com.mx/~chiapas/>

The dates for the International Earth First! Summer Gathering have been provisionally set for the week of 7th - 15th July 1997. Any major problems with these dates or if anybody has any ideas for a suitable site telephone: 0113 262 9365.

People allegedly associated with the US radical ecological publication Live Wild or Die! have been targeted by the authorities. One person has been continually targeted by the FBI who have also been harassing his parents. For more information contact: Katuah EF! Tennessee Valley Faction, 1414 Highland Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37916, USA.

A series of discussions are being held at the 121 Centre, 121 Railton Road, Brixton, London. The next one is on 5th January and is entitled 'A New Year - a time for optimism or...? Struggle, struggle, revolution, what's the connection? We can only win if we learn and gain strength from our struggles, but what struggles, how do we learn from our mistakes, and are we even going in the right direction? And if that is not enough to get you to go there are free pancakes for all participants!'

ANTI McDONALDS DAY

Two hundred of McDonalds UK stores were leafleted during October as part of the second Day of Solidarity With McDonalds Workers, and the twelfth World Day of Action Against McDonalds. There were protests in around twenty five different countries around the world, from Japan to Argentina. In North America alone about thirty cities were covered, including two rooftop demos where people locked themselves on and unfurled banners.

Meanwhile in the McLibel trial the closing speeches have started and are due to be finished by 18th December, after which the judge's personal verdict will be expected sometime in early 1997. If you would like to join the Adopt-a-Store network in preparation for the Victory Day of Action on the Saturday after the verdict contact the McLibel campaign on: 0171 713 1269.

BURN THE BASE

On Saturday 2nd November people from all over came to Faslane Peace Camp ready to confront the nuclear menace. Unfortunately heavy rain prevented the enthusiasm required to hold the workshops that had been planned to take place. Guided tours went both to the fence and gates of the base doing both the day and night. As well as this the Fence Liberation Front were apparently out in force.

On Sunday 3rd about thirty people descended upon the Ministry of Defence owned land surrounding the Coulport Nuclear Missile Depot. MOD Police Dog handlers forced people to leave - but it was rumoured the FLF had been out at play again!

Monday 4th saw a day of good actions starting at 6am with around fifty people marching to the north gate of the base. Once arriving at the gate an effigy of a Trident Submarine was burnt. Every car entering the base was blockaded, the workers were talked to and the police outwitted, with only two arrests. In the afternoon a group of people piled into a van, drove up to the open North Gate and eight people ran into the base. They were arrested quickly and charged with Breach of the Peace and breaking Faslane, Coulport and Rhu Narrows bye-laws.

The weekend concluded with a party and Guy Fawkes celebration both in the camp and at the base. As a final gesture for the weekend rockets were fired at the base!

Get yourself to Faslane for the first weekend in every month which is the perfect chance to take direct action against the base. They want to see these monthly camps grow so why not take some time to head up there for a while. For more details contact: 01436 820901.

OXFORD STREET PARTY

On 31st October Oxford had a Halloween Street Party. They knew this one would be different being the first party during the week, during the winter and during the night.

On the day, just before 6pm the drizzle stopped and the sky cleared in true Street Party spirit. A couple of hundred people had gathered at the Plain, with bagpipers and drummers providing music. Suddenly the Rinky Dink Sound System appeared from the other end of the roundabout and everyone went mad. After a few minutes the crowd surged round the roundabout to take Cowley Road, known as the backbone of 'alternative' Oxford.

The bus and traffic diversions set up by party goers were taken over by the police (we later found

out that there were some toolled-up riot vans nearby just in case). Within thirty minutes the Virus Sound System arrived and started setting up, then suddenly Desert Storm Sound System arrived, parked across the road, and opened up the side of their lorry to reveal speakers pumping out techno! The crowd loved it and a blinding party started with people dancing on bus shelters, on top of the sex shop, roofs and even on the street!

There were about 300-400 people at first but by around 10pm it was at least 600, and in total well over 1,200 joined in. About 11.20pm the sound systems were turned off, they then tried to move off to Port Meadow for an after-party party, but instead the police escorted them out of Oxford, and tried to get people's names and addresses.

For more information contact: Oxford Earth First! Box E, 111 Magdalen Road, Oxford, OX4 1RQ.

SOMERSET ACTIVIST NETWORK

Following an initial meeting on 26th October a new network has been set up in Somerset. The Somerset Activists Network aims to link up present Direct Action campaigns around the area providing support and publicity for them. As well as this it also aims to spread information in small towns and villages that are often missed out by the national networks. Joint actions are planned to be organised by several people throughout Somerset rather than just one or two in a particular town.

The first joint action on 9th November saw twenty people shut down a Shell petrol station for two hours in solidarity with the Ogoni people. Another much bigger joint action is planned for December. In addition to all this the network also plans to have a newsletter going next year. The next network meeting is on 18th January. For more details on this and upcoming actions in the Somerset area contact: 01458 851061.

BRIDGE BASHING

In North America an aboriginal group from the Ma Kominsing Anishinabeg tribe has admitted they blew up a bridge in Ontario's Temagami Wilderness. They claimed that they blew up the bridge as their opening shot in the battle to prevent logging and mining in the old growth forests.

This tribe is also believed to be responsible for the starting of a fire on another bridge in the nearby Armagh Township. (From Eco-Vegan, BM Box Heal, London WC1N 3XX).

ASHTON COURT QUARRY

On 31st July North Somerset planning committee voted to let Pioneer Aggregates expand their Drunkard Quarry by a further twenty acres into Ashton Court, a public park for the people of Bristol, not something for exploitation by transnational companies.

Work could start this winter with turf and soil being removed and then being used as screening banks, and the wild flower meadow being relaid on the opposite side of Longwood Lane. Even the council don't believe that the translocation of the habitat will work. Pioneer have already backed down from thirty four acres but, as the saying goes - no compromise!

The campaign that aims to resist this destruction meets every Wednesday at 6.30pm at 10 Picton Street, Montpelier, Bristol. For more details contact Avon Gorge Earth First! on: 01225 448556/314040.

How to Contact the Earth First! Action Update

By Post: Earth First! Action Update, PO Box 9656, London N4 4JY. By Phone: 0171 561 9146. By E-Mail: actionupdate@gn.apc.org.
Please enclose a SAE for replies, and to subscribe to the free e-mail server send us your details.

Earth First! Website address: <http://www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk/campaigns/earthfirst.html>

COPEX ARMS FAIR

On 5th November the main gate into the Copex Arms Fair at Sandown Park, Esher, was completely closed for the day, forcing attending vehicles into a side gate and through a large police cordon. Over five hundred people took part in the protest, organised by Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) and it was good to see such a mix of people all ages and backgrounds from all over the country, brought together by their disgust at the arms trade display at Copex. The people of East Timor, Tibet, Iran and Columbia were amongst those remembered with particular relevance to Copex. Indonesia, China, Iran, Columbia and Turkey are all torturing states known to have attended Copex in recent years. Copex was of course, exposed as a market place for electric shock batons and other torture equipment to these countries, among others.

Initially the main gate blockade took the form of a 'Remembrance Ceremony', which opened with a two minute silence followed by speakers from a number of third world support groups stepping forward to bear witness to the atrocities committed with British weapons. The blockade was then extended to other gates with five arrests being made.

Throughout the day both small and large groups of people outwitted the huge police presence by breaking into the grounds and getting over to the buildings. At one point a group of about thirty people made it to the steps where they remained hassling Copex attendees entering the fair, until the flustered police got it together to remove them one by one. At one point a group of people decided to take a different approach and galloped along the racecourse in the direction of the main building with police baffled for a while as to how to get to them in vehicles.

As the fair ended at 6pm the blockade was lifted and a silent torch-lit procession made it's way back to the assembly point.

Hopefully next year the protest outside Copex will grow even bigger, not only putting pressure on Copex to close down, but on the government to close down all aspects of the torture trade completely. For more information call CAAT on: 0171 281 0297.

THE HUNGER GATHERING

In mid-November, fourteen people from the UK travelled to Italy to be part of a global gathering of farmers, campaigners and activists. They came together (despite the efforts of the United Nations, Italian officials and NGO's) to have a counter conference in opposition to the

official World Food Summit, and to address the real issues of the current food crisis. The Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) summit was a joke, with governments and giant food multinationals such as Cargill, Nestle, Ciba Geigy, Unilever etc. promising, through biotechnology and free trade, to create food security.

There were various ideas about what the Hunger Gathering should attempt to achieve. Only a few had one objective - to shut down The Food Summit. Easier said than done.

Attending the Hunger Gathering were over 300 people including representatives from the Zapatistas, the Indian farmers union, the KRRS, as well as many others from all over the world. There were workshops, exhibitions, performances, demonstrations and actions throughout the week.

Helicopters constantly surveyed the squat, plain clothed police infiltrated meetings and took photographs of people entering and leaving. The Food Summit itself was guarded by 4,000 armed police and security. The political police even telephoned the squat to say that they were closely watching the British activists, that they knew their names and what they had planned.

Inside the summit, press conferences were disrupted by naked protesters revealing 'The Naked Truth' about biotechnology and free trade, sending the security into instant panic. On the streets Hunger Gathering participants protested with a black gag march and monuments were decorated with rotting flesh and bones - all pretty symbolic and surreal! Lessons were learnt by those that attended and next time they will be better prepared!

The most impressive thing to come from the gathering however was the incredible network of activists and campaigners from all over the world who are sharing information, tactics and building campaigns together. Our common understanding being that we need to regain control over the way our food is produced and distributed.

For further information contact Manchester EF! on: 0161 224 4846 or A-SEED Europe on: 31.20.668.2236, e-mail: aseedeur@antenna.nl.

GENETIC ENGINEERING

On November 29th the first shipment containing genetically manipulated soya beans made it's way into Liverpool Docks, only to be stopped by Greenpeace activists. They delayed the ship from docking for over twenty-four hours by using inflatables, as well as people occupying the unloading cranes and locking onto loading ladders.

There is to be an International Day of Action against Genetic Engineering on December 14th. Earth First! as well as other groups will be taking action. Campaign packs are also available. Contact Manchester EF! on: 0161 224 4846.

EDITORIAL

The observant amongst you will have noticed that this is a combined November/December Action Update. The reason for this is that we have been, ahem, busy elsewhere for a couple of weeks so were unable to get an issue out at the beginning of November.

We have overhauled the contacts listings for this month. After a phone around of most groups on the contact list it turned out that fair few of them are non-existent or not active. There is no point in having a contact on the list that is not active, as new people phoning up to get involved are not exactly going to be inspired on being told that nothing is going on and there are no plans for anything either. If there are one or two people who want to get it together in the area, but not enough for actions or a cohesive group, get organising - call a meeting, talk to your friends and the local green/anarchist/politicos group, handout flyers at likely places - use your imagination and as soon as you do have an active group together let us know and we will add you to the contact list.

Anyone that is thinking about taking on the Action Update after the March issue should phone us to talk about it as soon as you can. We already have two groups interested but nothing definite yet. There is a rumour going around that we will continue to do the printing and other aspects of the production, but this is not the case, if you take it on you take everything on, the collation of articles, editing, finances, subscriptions, layout, printing and distribution. Ideally there should be at least four people committed to doing it for the year.

The Action Update is broke so please send us some money, and remember that any amount helps to keep the Update going.

LEGAL DISCLAIMER: The editors of the Earth First! Action Update do not intend to encourage people to carry out any illegal action. The Earth First! Action Update is for information purposes only.

EVENTS

DECEMBER

2 Twelfth anniversary of the Bhopal chemical disaster in India that has so far killed around 7,000 people. Smash Union Carbide and all industry!

5 National Anti Open-Cast Mining Action. Visit to the Duke of Devonshire's estate in Derbyshire Meet at Chesterfield British Rail car park, 10.30 am. Call: 0171 672 9698.

2-6 Week of Actions in London to stop arms exports to Indonesia. Contact: 0171 281 0297 or 01263 512049.

8 Anniversary of Mumia Abu Jamal's arrest. For details of the meeting planned contact Friends of MOVE on: 0171 272 5368.

9 Start of committal hearings against the Gandalf 6 (Green anarchists AND ALF) at Portsmouth Magistrates Court. Contact: BCM 1715, London WC1N 3XX.

10 Actions to target BP over their involvement in Colombian death squads. Picket outside their HQ 12-2pm, Britannic House, 1 Finsbury Circus, London, EC2. For more details call: 0171 357 0388.

14 International Day of Action against Genetic Engineering. Organise an action or leafleting in your area. For information call Manchester Earth First! on: 0161 224 4846 or London Reclaim The Streets on: 0171 281 9146 for an action in London.

14 March and Rally in Support of the Liverpool Dockers. Meet 12 noon at Hyde Park in London. For more details contact: 0151 207 3388 or 0181 442 0090.

14 Free all detainees in Harmsworth Detention Centre near Heathrow, London. Picket of the centre 11.30am - 1.30pm. Please bring Christmas gifts for the detainees - soap, phone cards and pre-paid air mail letters are best. For more details contact: 0181 571 5019.

14 Action against BAA McArthur Glen, supermarket developers turning Naburn Woods into a retail park development in York. For more information contact York EF! on: 01904 410185.

18 Action in support of the Kirkstall Valley campaign opposing the Morrisons Supermarket Development. For more details call Leeds Earth First! on: 0113 262 9365.

21 Solstice Gathering at Menwith Hill Peace Camp with actions happening all week. Contact: 01943 468 593.

25 Pay Bernard Matthews a visit! For more details contact: 0155 361 7521.

26 Hunt Saboteur Actions across the country. For details of your local one contact: 01273 622 827.

5 JANUARY

5 'A New Year - a time for optimism or...?' discussion at 121 Centre, 121 Railton Road, Brixton, London SE24.

9-11 Road Reunion Rampage - Newbury National Days of Action. Direct Action workshops, briefings on the 9th followed by action on the 10th and a rally on the 11th. Contact Third Battle of Newbury on: 01635 45545 or 01635 550 552 for more details.

14-15 FEBRUARY

14-15 First Anniversary of the Sea Empress Disaster. Massive Direct Action Against the Oil Industry and Milford Haven Port Authority. More information nearer the time. Start organising an action now!

BRIGHTON NEWS

Wednesday 20th November saw the Brighton crew squat the Old Courthouse, that was originally squatted two years ago, to use as a venue for the Direct Action Conference due to happen on Saturday 23rd. The squat was short lived as the police came in on the Thursday morning and illegally evicted it. There were ten arrests for various offences. On the Friday morning a massive old BT building was opened up. The conference started slightly later than timetabled but all the workshops and discussions happened and overall it was a very informative and useful day. Workshop subjects ranged from genetic engineering to racism and the major discussion about where do we go from here saw a few interesting suggestions and ideas emerge that will hopefully be acted on by people in the future. For more details contact the Justice? office on: 01273 685913.

A30 ACTION

The impending eviction of the anti-road camps, resisting the construction of the A30 road in Devon, that could have happened from any date after the 14th October, has not yet happened. The first week the eviction was likely to happen saw people from all over the country come down to help resist the destruction of this piece of countryside. When the eviction did not happen people got together to take the battle to the state and its servants. The first target was the offices of W.S. Atkins which were hit and briefly occupied on Monday 14th October followed on Wednesday 16th by an occupation of the offices of the solicitors who are acting for the eviction. After an anonymous tip off about a meeting that was happening there between police and the bailiffs people couldn't resist a visit - much to the cops and bailiffs surprise!

The following week saw the arrival of an armoured vehicle courtesy of the AAA (formerly the KLF). This did not amuse the police at all and after more than a week, parked up by the Trollheim camp, the police came in to make sure that they left the area.

The last week of November had police going into Fairmile ground camp attempting to damage air vents from the tunnels.

False alarms are still rife and as always people and equipment are still needed for when the eviction does actually kick off. For more information call A30 Action on: 01404 815729.

MANCHESTER RTS

Another successful Reclaim the Streets in Manchester on the 19th October saw a chunk of Oxford Road declared a temporary car free zone.

Banners were unfurled, a tripod erected, and handsome spider-monkey person scampered to the top. Enter much loved Desert Storm sound system, with their own special brand of over-bearing techno-torture and the crowd went into dance frenzy, whilst delicious free vegan food was gulped down gagging throats by passers-by.

Present were a contingent from the Liverpool Dockers' Support Group. The only hiccup of the day came when the Sunflower Cafe van was impounded, for no apparent reason. Hard scrounged funds may now be needed to get it out of the nick.

The day's activities climaxed with a short play 'The Car on Trial' with everybody's favourite global-warming, eco-polluting, phallic extension up before the beak for its crimes against humanity and the planet. All in all, a sterling demonstration of the power of the groovy people against the forces of concrete.

Contact Manchester Reclaim The Streets on: (0161) 226 9904.

NORTHERN EF! GATHERING

The Northern Earth First! Gathering went well with workshops on genetic engineering, the Job Seekers Allowance, International Networking, Manchester Airport's second runway, dealing with the media, Naburn Woods, Bingley, herbal first aid, no shop day, Russland Beeches and the like.

There were also discussions on making stronger links across the North. Each group will contribute to a 'Northern Newsletter' published bi-monthly. Phone-trees will also be set up, so contact us if you live in the area and want to be involved in actions. To get on the mailing list or to contribute to the newsletter, write to: EF! Northern Newsletter, c/o York LEAF, Peace Centre, 15a Clifford St, York.

STRINGERS COMMON

The A320 road widening and straightening scheme will cut a new route through a wood and wet grassland. Land will be taken from an SSSI and a pond will be relocated. In all over two hundred mature trees will be cut down, as well as many young trees that they did not even bother to count. The County Council wants to build two waste incinerators and the nearby industrial estate is one of the possible sites. The A320 would be the access route for the three hundred lorries per day that the plant will generate.

Clearance work could start late December or early January, so people are needed now to work on defenses. They also need all the usual equipment - tarps, cement, polyprop etc. For more details call:

01483 32167. To get there head from Guildford town centre, take the A320 Woking Road from the top of North Street, follow for about two miles until you see an Esso garage on the left. The camp is in the woods immediately behind the garage. Buses 34 and 48 from Guildford will take you to the garage.

SHELL

November 4-10 saw a week of anti-Shell actions to commemorate the execution of the Ogoni activists a year earlier. Around the UK and the world Shell stations were closed down or picketed. There will be a list of actions that took place in the next Delta newsletter.

Latest news is the London Symphony Orchestra are touring the country with the whole tour being sponsored by Shell, they will be in Glasgow early December. Isn't it time we all got more cultured? For more information call Delta on: 0116 225 3223.

NO SHOP DAY

It seems that there were in fact two No Shop days. Many people celebrated this worldwide anti-consumerism day on November 29th, others took action on Saturday 30th. In England there were actions country-wide. Sheffield saw 50-80 people spend the day at 'MeadowHELL', one of Britain's largest temples of consumerism. Sheffield Kids Against McDonalds distributed their own leaflets there, with security's requests for them to move on ignored until they were forced to plead. Elsewhere in the shopping mall there ensued games of cat and mouse with security while the whole place was leafleted and free tea, coffee and daffodil bulbs given out to people.

Two monks were heard to be preaching from the escalators asking shoppers to "Please use up all the World's resources by December 25th so that you can all find eternal happiness in Merry MeadowHELL".

Meanwhile in Manchester, the Arndale Centre had a visit from Aliens perplexed at the levels of frantic activity based around the purchase of products, the vast majority of which seemed not only to be surplus to living requirements but had also been transported to the Arndale Centre from all over the world by burning huge amounts of precious fossil fuels. London saw a living room set up in a Kensington High Street arcade where a walking, talking TV espoused the dangers of consumerism. Later in the afternoon there was a mass leafleting and stickering of supermarkets, clothes stores, bank cash machines and London Underground. For more information write to: Enough, One World Centre, 6 Mount Street, Manchester, M2 5NS.

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1996

UPDATE

Please send me the next twelve copies of the EF! Action Update, here is my minimum contribution of £5 (£6.10 International). Don't send cash, make cheques payable to Earth First! Donations above £5, for those who can afford it, enable us to reply to enquiries and give free subscriptions to prisoners, libraries, community groups etc. Please send more if you can. False names are better for security, and postal orders are more secure than cheques.

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A7



The Frogfish (*Histiocystis histio*) is particularly well camouflaged and lives among the golden sargassum seaweed.



Job Seekers Allowance

ACTIVIST? UNEMPLOYED?

The Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) is set to force people presently claiming benefit to accept low paid, menial work or lose their benefit. It will also lower the average wage.

WHAT IS THE 'JOB SEEKERS ALLOWANCE'?

The JSA is set to come into force in October 1996, replacing Unemployment Benefit and Income Support. You will have to sign a personal contract - your Job Seekers Agreement. In the first twelve months, a quarter of a million claimants are expected to be worse off. *10,000 people are expected to lose ALL benefit - with no other income.* 'Active signing' will mean an interrogation each time you sign, on what you have done to look for work. People will be forced to accept low paid work with bad terms and conditions. *Existing jobs will become more vulnerable to wage cuts and poorer conditions.*

LOSS OF BENEFIT

You'll lose benefit for six months if you 'voluntarily' leave a job for any reason, including sexual harassment or ill health. You'll also lose benefit for six months if you're sacked, refuse work or make yourself unavailable for a job, even for ethical or political reasons.

IT'S NOT JUST THE TORIES

Tony Blair is also calling on claimants to fulfil conditions before getting benefit. Frank Field, a Labour MP, has called for claimants suspected of working to sign 4 times a day!

JOB SEEKERS DIRECTION

This allows Employment Service (ES) staff to direct people to look more employable - e.g. look more 'feminine', get a haircut, tell you what to wear etc. ES staff are having their pay cut and put on an 'incentive scheme' i.e. the more people they take off benefit, the bigger the bonus they get! Front line staff will decide who gets their benefit cut. Attacks on staff have gone up 240% - and will surely get worse.



SUPPORT STRIKERS

Most ES staff oppose the JSA, a third of them will be made redundant as a direct result of it. There have been forty strikes at Job Centres around the country, in some areas they have disrupted JSA trials. The Civil and Public Service Association voted 3-1 in favour of industrial action. Support the strikers at your nearest Job Centre. If there is a strike it doesn't affect you receiving a giro - you just don't have to sign. If the strike is successful then there is a good chance the JSA will be scrapped. Contact your nearest group from the list below for details of your nearest striking office.

ACTION AGAINST THE JSA

Support striking Employment Service Workers. Occupy Job Centres (not where you sign yourself!). Removing cards (or adding your own!) at the centre causes chaos. Be careful not to mess up peoples benefit claims. Over cooperate. Have everyone turn up at the Job Centre at the same time.

All turn up at work places / companies, 'seeking work' at the same time. This will be unproductive and bosses won't want to take advantage of the JSA to employ troublemakers like you. Set up an action group if there's not one in your area. Inform other claimants about the JSA and how to fight it.

HOW TO SURVIVE

Get clued up. Pretending to fulfil your agreement is easier if you know what's in it! If you appear to know you stuff, they're less likely to see you as an easy 'quota filler'.

Don't give them an excuse to target you. Be on time, friendly, confident and 'smartish'.

Don't accept Job Club help (unless you want to), they're bound to find an opening.

Interviews are easy to mess up - ask awkward questions, e.g. about the union or the company's ethical practices, make yourself an undesirable worker. Don't be too keen.

Lastly... Sort your life out so you can be an activist without relying on benefit. Form housing co-ops, join local exchange trading systems, look after each other. If you are forced into employment remember the possibilities for direct action on the job are endless...

Contact your local group or organise your own:

Oxford Unemployed Workers and Claimants Union, East Oxford Community Centre, Princess Street, Oxford OX4 1HU

Reading Solidarity Group, c/o The Info Shop, 26 Silver Street, Reading RG1.

Exeter Claimants, Box 185, The Flying Post, Exeter EX4 4EW

Bristol Claimants, Box 51, 82 Colston St, Bristol BS1 5BB

Edinburgh Autonomous Group, c/o Peace and Justice Centre, St Johns, Princess Street, Edinburgh

Bradford 1 in 12 Club, 20-23 Albion St, Bradford BD1 2LI

Plymouth Claimants Union, PO Box 21, Plymouth PL1 1QS

Somerset Community Defence Campaign, 4 Gordon Terrace, Bridgewater, TA6 5JP

Westfield Association, 6 South Baffin St, Dundee DD4 6SW

Brighton Claimants Community Action, c/o Prior House, 6 Tilbury Place, Brighton BN2 2GY

Incapacity Action, PO Box 9, 136 - 138 Kingsland High Street, London E8

EARTH FIRST! CONTACTS DECEMBER '95

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Eire

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01225 314040

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Denegal St
Belfast

Birmingham EFI
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Caledonian Green Circle
67 Burghhead Drive
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Glos. GL52 2HT

Chichester EFI
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W.Sussex PO19 4GL
01243 771640/533850

Cisbury Ring EFI
c/o Prior House
6 Tilbury Place
Brighton BN2 2GY

Dart Valley EFI
c/o SWAN
PO Box 4
Buckfastleigh
Devon TQ11 0YZ

Doncaster EFI
c/o 54 Wellgate
Conisbrough. DN12 3HN
01302 882471

Edinburgh EFI
Peace & Justice Centre
St Johns Crypt
Princes St, Edinburgh

Faslane Peace Camp
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Green Anarchist Network
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Newcastle EFI!
4, The Cloth Market
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No Derby ByPass
88 Abbey Street
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No M11 Link
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South Downs EFI!
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Earth First! is a network of independent groups who believe in doing just that-putting the earth first. It is based on a concept of non-hierarchical organisation, direct action, and the empowerment of individuals to confront the ecological catastrophe facing our planet. The above contacts are groups in this network. Let Earth First! Action Update know of any alterations/additions/removals from the list. Alterations from last months are shown in bold and underlined groups may no longer exist. Telephone numbers given for international contacts include UK dialling codes. Please note that the international contacts given are not "in charge" of each country's actions but simply represent a way in to their direct action network.